

HALF-EMPTY, HALF-FULL

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commends to his colleagues the October 5, 2003, an editorial from the Omaha World-Herald, which is entitled "Half-empty, half-full." As the editorial correctly notes, Iraq remains a country "full of positive potential but also fraught with danger."

[From the Omaha World-Herald, Oct. 5, 2003]

HALF-EMPTY, HALF-FULL

Gene Taylor, a Democratic U.S. representative from Mississippi, recently returned from a trip to Baghdad. He struck the right note when he said the situation in Iraq "is neither going as well as the administration says it's going nor as badly as the media say it is going."

Indeed, the situation is decidedly mixed. That hasn't stopped diehard partisans on either side from trying their best to highlight only one facet of the matter, however.

The catalog of challenges is well known. Saddam Hussein loyalists and outside terrorists have succeeded, for the time being, in rattling people's nerves about security. Enemies of the U.S. campaign have assassinated one member of Iraq's Governing Council and murdered a Shiite cleric who advocated tolerance for the American presence. They have used pinprick attacks to kill and would U.S. soldiers at a slow but relatively steady rate that has diminished support for the Iraq operations among many Americans.

Meanwhile, saboteurs continue to hobble the electrical grid and oil-pipe network. Large numbers of Iraqis remain without jobs. Mafia-style gangs have become a serious concern in Baghdad. Ethnic tensions simmer among Iraq's Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds, sometimes erupting violence.

The United States has come up short, so far, in gaining financial assistance from foreign governments. And a variety of uncertainties beset the ambitious endeavor to move Iraq's political system toward a constitutional republic.

And yet, much is going right. A vivid description of the progress came in an opinion essay written by Julie Flint, a veteran Middle East journalist, for a Lebanese newspaper. Media depictions of Iraq as trapped in bottomless turmoil are wrong, she argued:

"Outside Baghdad, in the Shiite south, the mood was overwhelmingly upbeat. In Basra, ordinary people gave the thumbs-up at the mere sight of a Briton. . . . In Amara, streets were buzzing well after midnight. . . . Shops are overflowing with imported goods; food prices are lower than they were during Saddam's last years. Approximately 85 percent of primary and secondary schools have reopened. . . . All Iraqi cities and 85 percent of its smaller towns have fully functioning municipalities."

Similarly, Pamela Harris, a United Press International writer praised for her wartime reporting, noted in a recent good news/bad news analysis how she had seen "happy children running out to greet Marines when they walk through downtown Hillah without body armor or rifles because they have worked long and hard to win the trust of the townspeople, and they have succeeded."

USA Today recently noted that, thanks to U.S. policy that as tapped \$1.7 billion in Iraqi assets frozen during the Gulf War of 1991, government workers in Iraq have received major pay increases. The article described a police officer whose monthly pay has gone from \$25 before the war to \$275 now.

This leap in the purchasing power of many Iraqis, combined with a tariff-free influx of imported products, has spurred a dramatic flurry of consumer spending, not least on major items such as refrigerators and ovens. (The average price for home appliances has fallen by 41 percent from prewar levels)

Iraq, in short, is in the middle of a momentous time of transition—full of positive potential but also fraught with danger.

As the debate rages over whether the glass is half-empty or half-full, one thing is certain: The United States cannot cut and run. Together with the Iraqi people and whatever support can be mustered from the international community, we will have to see this through—without minimizing how difficult the task will be.

TRIBUTE TO DAVIS HELBERG

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Davis Helberg's leadership with the Northeast-Midwest Institute. Davis has been an Institute director for the past eight years and ably led the board's nominations committee. With his effortless management style, he ensured that the Institute balanced the region's needs for economic vitality and environmental quality. But this should surprise no one.

If there is one word I could use to describe Davis, it is "passionate." A native Minnesotan who grew up on a family farm in a small Finnish community where hard work was considered a hometown value, Davis has been a passionate worker and leader throughout his varied careers. Living near Lake Superior, it's not surprising that in 1959, at the age of 17, Davis worked his first paying job as a deckhand on a lake steamer. After a few years as a newspaper reporter, he returned to his maritime career, working as a vessel agency employee, port public relations director, president of a stevedoring company and, until his retirement earlier this year, Executive Director of the Seaway Port Authority of Duluth. For more than forty years, Davis has tirelessly served Duluth, the broader Great Lakes community, the national maritime industry, and the northeast and midwest States. It is said that Davis Helberg's name is synonymous with the Great Lakes maritime industry in many national and international circles. I couldn't agree more. Might I add that I believe he is the most passionate Finn I have ever met.

I have known Davis for almost three decades. During that time, I have been the recipient of much of his passionate maritime advocacy. But his many accomplishments are attributable to more than just passion. Davis succeeded in his many endeavors because of solid leadership, vast knowledge, unparalleled experience and energetic dedication, not to mention his legendary storytelling ability. He served 24 years as executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority—the longest serving in the Great Lakes, and he has been a frequent chairman of the American Association of Port Authorities. After eight years, his invaluable service at the Northeast Midwest Institute will be sorely missed.

Mr. Speaker, I was a founder of the Northeast-Midwest Congressional Coalition. The

Coalition and the Institute long have provided valuable analysis on an array of economic and environmental issues. They have worked hard to ensure bipartisan cooperation among Midwestern and Northeastern lawmakers. Davis Helberg, with his unique talents and unwavering passion, has improved that tradition. He made a difference. His contributions to the Northeast-Midwest Institute are much appreciated.

PERMANENT AUTHORITY FOR EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES FROM PAYING SUBSISTENCE CHARGES WHILE HOSPITALIZED

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strongest possible support for H.R. 2998, and urge my colleagues to join me in passing this important legislation.

I am extremely pleased that the leadership has brought this bill to the floor today, but I am thoroughly confused as to why the Department of Defense has even made this legislation necessary. It is absolutely mind-boggling that they charge military personnel for meals while they are hospitalized with injuries suffered while in combat or training.

Mr. Speaker, on September 24 we passed the conference report for the FY04 Defense Appropriations bill, which provided appropriations for the DoD totaling \$368 billion dollars. This figure marked an increase of approximately \$13 billion for the DoD. I voted in support of this conference report because I felt that it provided important funding for our troops and for the war on terrorism, but I cannot believe that the DoD, with around \$355 billion in funds for FY03, could possibly charge these men and women for the meals they eat while they recover from injuries. This is unconscionable, and I thank Mr. YOUNG for introducing his legislation to remedy this outrage.

I am a cosponsor of this legislation and I will most certainly be voting in support of its passage. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of our troops and to correct this ridiculous situation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ARMENIAN VICTIMS INSURANCE FAIRNESS ACT

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Armenian Victims Insurance Fairness Act"—legislation to provide states with the authority to assist survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

At the end of the 19th century, major American and European insurance companies began expanding their operations into the Ottoman Empire and thousands of Armenians in the area purchased life insurance policies as a form of savings and investment for the